

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

POLICY PAPER #5

60/40 Housing Type Policy

DATE: October 9, 2000

ISSUE: **60/40 Housing Split**

BACKGROUND:

The Steering Committee has discussed the Community Framework Plan (CFP) at several meetings. The Committee has expressed a consensus to continue with the long term vision of what the county will become (Hometown Plan). One of the goals of the CFP is the 60/40 housing split for new residential development. The goal was later translated into the Land Use and Housing Policy which the local communities endorsed.

The Growth Management Board remanded this issue back to the County and smaller cities on the grounds that the smaller cities plans did not adequately address the housing split or affordability issues. As a result, the County and smaller cities adopted policy 5.7.1 listed below to address the housing split and affordability issues.

“A. *Community Framework Plan*

The Community Framework Plan encourages growth in centers, urban and rural, with each center separate and distinct from the others..... In order to achieve this, development in some urban areas would have a higher average density than currently exists in parts of the urbanizing area, approximately 6 to 10 units per net residential acre (4.5 to 7.5 gross units per acre), with more housing being single family on smaller lots (5,000 sf) and multi-family. Approximately 40 percent of the new housing would be duplexes, townhouses, or apartments. This variety of housing types and sizes would provide more opportunities for builders to provide affordable and attainable housing for first time home buyers, retirees, and lower-income families.”

“2.2.0 Communities, urban and rural, should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries and to ensure an adequate supply of affordable and attainable housing....”

“2.2.4. All cities, towns and the County share the responsibility for achieving a rational and equitable distribution of affordable housing.” (Framework Plan Policy 2.2.4)

As per a remand from the Hearings Board, Policy 5.7.1 was amended in 1996 with the addition of the following strategies:

Policy 5.7.1 reads:

“Provide opportunities for new development to occur in a housing type ratio of 60 percent single family and 40 percent multi-family. Strategies to achieve these opportunity include but are not limited to:

- a. Minimum density for single family.*
- b. Minimum density for multi-family.*
- c. Provisions for Accessory Dwelling Units.*
- d. Provision for duplexes in single family.*
- e. Provisions for townhouses/ rowhouses.*
- f. Allowance for manufactured home parks.*
- g. Provision for diversified housing types allowed as part of a Planned Unit Development.*
- h. Recognition of the flexibility allowed in housing types as part of a Mixed Use Development (i.e., living units above commercial areas).*
- i. Recognition of Assisted Living Units as a housing type”.*

ORIGINAL INTENT

The intent of the policy, and the intent of the Hearings Board in its remand, was to insure that all communities in the county provide a variety of housing types and forms. Through a variety of housing types and choices, the assumption made was that the “affordability” objectives will also be met. The policy makes the assumption that multifamily (including duplexes, apartments and townhouses) housing is key to achieving a variety of housing choices.

Secondly, the policy specifies a share of multifamily housing in the community as an implicit way to meet the density objectives of the comprehensive plans. The higher density commonly found in multifamily housing is necessary to meet the density and affordability objectives of the Hometown concept of the CFP.

What issues have been raised on this subject?

The policy proposes that 40% of all new housing in the community be constructed in a form commonly associated with rental tenure. Most communities, however, do not want to promote rental housing, preferring the values associated with owner occupied housing. Many find the idea of 40 percent of new units in a rental form unpalatable.

Even though the policy is written in terms of housing form (single and multifamily) it is implicitly a housing tenure policy because of the close association between single family housing and ownership, and multifamily housing and rental.

The smallest communities suggest the infrastructure (sewer specifically) may not be in place to support the level of density commonly associated with multifamily housing (or even single family densities). It can also be argued that larger communities have an easier time allowing for the construction of multifamily units because the supporting infrastructure is in place.

Some people also question the use of this policy to achieve an urban form when density policies are available (see policy paper #4 and the 6/16 rule). They question why the community needs to specify housing form and tenure when the objective of growth management is to create an urban form. They believe a density policy is sufficient.

Some people also question the achievement of affordable housing goals using a requirement for single and multifamily housing. They note that housing form and tenure do not, necessarily, equate to affordability, and that the housing form policy diverts attention from the real issue of providing affordable housing. These people would like to see the goals of housing “tenure” and housing type be separated and clarified to include additional types of housing units that qualify as “multi-family” such as manufactured homes in parks, Accessory dwelling units, housing in Planned Unit Developments and Assisted Living Units as specified in Policy 5.7.1. A separate goal that deals directly with affordable housing is also suggested.

Others support the policy as an important step to facilitate housing variety, affordability and efficient use of urban land, and to follow through on the vision established in the CFP, but question whether the policy is clear enough or strong enough, since only the Vancouver UGA is close to meeting it. This is not consistent with adopted Countywide Planning Policies y 2.1 (B) and CFP Policy 2.2.4 which require local jurisdictions to share affordable housing responsibilities equitably.

Is the policy being implemented?

Most jurisdictions have included housing options consistent with the policy. However, according to figures from Clark County GIS as reported in the Plan Monitoring Report, only within the Vancouver and Washougal UGA’s has new housing construction ratios come close to meeting the policy. Other UGA’s have had very little new multi-family development.

All other UGA's are not coming close to the standard even when adequate infrastructure is in place.

While the 60/40 split is applicable to each jurisdiction, some cities have adopted an inconsistent internal 75/25 housing goal. Should the smaller cities continue to have internal 75/25 housing goals? Is the 40% multi-family goal appropriate or too high for smaller cities? Will the lower ratio be challenged or result in another remand?

Options for Change:

Eliminate the policy and use average density of 6/16 as a target.

Implications: If this policy is eliminated, it is likely that the Hearings Board will require inclusion of another policy that achieves the intent of the original statement. Other policies that support a diversity of housing types and affordability levels might be acceptable. Elimination of the policy would likely mean that present disparities between jurisdictions would continue unless some measurable and achievable action(s) were taken by each jurisdiction.

Keep the policy and increase the proportion of single family housing.

Implications: A policy supporting, for example 70 percent single family and 30 percent multifamily might be more palatable to communities, more supportive of home ownership and more achievable given the current state of infrastructure and political interest. More single family housing and the associated density (see Policy Paper #4) would increase pressure to increase the size of the urban growth boundaries. A clarification of language, for example, stating it as 70 percent detached housing forms, and 30 percent attached housing forms, might provide an additional degree of clarity and decrease the link to housing tenure.

Restate the policy using averaged densities, and requiring a mix of housing types through the use of a cap on any single type., (See revision submitted by cities).

Implications: This option would focus on density objectives which would be different for differently sized urban growth areas..... . This allows for flexibility from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. This option might have an effect on the size of UGAs.

Restate the policy as an affordability expectation, eliminating reference to housing type or form.

Implications: This option would remove all reference to a distribution of single family and multifamily and focus on an affordability objective. This could, for example, target the percentage of new housing units created in a community that must be affordable, regardless of their form. This approach would be strongest if linked to a density objective. For instance the policy could state a goal for density and a goal for affordability.

Retain existing policy and add an affordability expectation.

Implications: The Hearings Board finds the existing policy acceptable. A clarification of language, for example, stating it as 60 percent detached housing forms, and 40 percent attached housing forms, might provide an additional degree of clarity and decrease the link to housing tenure without altering the policy. This option should not impact the size of the UGAs. This approach would provide the stability of retaining the existing policy, and add the strength of stating a target for affordable housing.

This alternative would result in a countywide minimum standard for new “affordable housing units” and a definition of what “affordable housing” means and strategies for how the local jurisdictions would provide opportunities to meet the new affordable housing standard (i.e. require a percentage of affordable units within each development, establish a government subsidized financial incentive for constructing the affordable units).

Table 1.6.1 Single-Family and Multi-Family Units Built by UGA: 1995-1999

		1995	% 1995	1996	% 1996	1997	% 1997	1998	% 1998	1999	% 1999	95 to 99	% 95 to 99
Battle Ground	SF	168	85%	337	99%	345	80%	221	98%	91	97%	1162	88%
	MF	28	15%	58	1%	2	20%	64	2%	3	3%	155	12%
	Total	196	100%	395	100%	433	100%	285	100%	94	100%	1,317	100%
Camas	SF	272	100%	306	100%	344	94%	249	100%	105	96%	1,276	91%
	MF	67	20%	9	3%	22	6%	31	12%	4	4%	133	9%
	Total	339	100%	315	100%	366	100%	249	112%	109	100%	1,409	100%
La Center	SF	68	96%	60	95%	86	78%	50	63%	25	100%	289	95%
	MF	6	8%	8	13%	0	0%	2	4%	0	0%	16	5%
	Total	74	100%	63	100%	86	100%	52	100%	25	100%	305	100%
Ridgefield	SF	31	100%	25	100%	30	100%	17	100%	10	71%	113	97%
	MF	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	29%	4	3%
	Total	31	100%	25	100%	30	100%	17	100%	14	100%	117	100%
Vancouver	SF	1,917	73%	2,119	70%	2,160	94%	2,249	65%	1300	76%	9,745	74%
	MF	722	27%	889	30%	148	6%	1,204	35%	405	24%	3,368	26%
	Total	2,639	100%	3,008	100%	2,308	100%	3,453	100%	1705	100%	13,113	100%
Washougal	SF	43	36%	98	90%	67	83%	83	98%	40	87%	331	75%
	MF	75	64%	11	10%	14	17%	2	2%	6	13%	108	25%
	Total	118	100%	109	100%	81	100%	85	100%	46	100%	439	100%
Yacolt	SF	9	100%	11	85%	10	100%	17	100%	3	100%	50	96%
	MF	0	0%	2	15%	0	0%	0	0%	0		2	4%
	Total	9	100%	13	100%	10	100%	17	100%	3	100%	52	100%
Rural	SF	536	100%	546	100%	528	98%	623	100%	315	100%	2,548	99.7%
	MF	0	0%	0	0%	8	2%	0	0%	0		8	0%
	Total	536	100%	546	100%	536	100%	623	100%	315	100%	2,556	100%
Sum	SF	3,044	77%	3,502	78%	3,570	95%	3,509	73%	1889	82%	15,514	80%
	MF	898	23%	977	22%	194	5%	1,303	27%	422	18%	3,794	20%
	Total	3,942	100%	4,479	100%	3,764	100%	4,812	100%	2311	100%	19,308	100%

Source: Clark County Department of GIS

Note: Refer to Plan Monitoring Report, Pages 53 and 54, for further discussion and definitions.

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